

Bear Lake School District No. 33

Bear Lake Middle School Differentiated Compensation Proposal

The Bear Lake Middle School proposal for awarding differentiated compensation is based on the following goals:

1. The measure should leverage our focus to successfully implement the Idaho Core Standards, prepare students for the SBAC assessment, and prepare students for success in college or career.
2. The measure of student achievement used to award differentiated pay should be meaningful and challenging.
3. The measure and indicators of success should be defensible to staff and the public as a valid measure of achievement with a definable achievement goal that involves all teachers.
4. The achievement goal should be attainable so that all persons who invest in developing students' thinking and writing skills through compare and contrast activities and writing assignments will receive the compensation bonus as described in the distribution section of this proposal.

Background and Research:

The kind of thinking and communication skills required in a compare and contrast paper are found throughout the Idaho Core Standards. Reading standards for grades 6,7, and 8 specify that students should “compare and contrast texts of different forms or genres (e.g. stories and poems, historical novels and fantasy stories) in terms of their approaches to similar themes and topics” [reading literature standard 9]. 6th – 8th graders should be able to “compare and contrast one author’s presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography about the same person)” [reading information standard 9]. In writing, the same students should be able to “introduce a topic, organize ideas, concepts, and information using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause and effect” [writing standard 2a].

Compare and contrast is an expected thinking tool for analyzing information in the content areas as well. For example, Science standard 6-8.9 specifies that students should be able to “compare and contrast the information gained from experiments, simulations, video, or multimedia sources with that gained from reading a text on the same topic.” History/social studies standards require students in grades 6-8 to “present the relationships between information and ideas clearly and efficiently” [WHST 6-8.6], “analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source” [RH 6-8.9], and “distinguish between fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text” [RH 6-8.8]. All of these tasks require students to compare or contrast varied opinions or sources of information and to communicate their findings based on the analysis.

Marzano and others have researched the benefits of compare and contrast as a strategy for making deep and meaningful analysis and for applying learning to real-world contexts. In his book, *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement* (2001), Marzano lists identifying similarities and differences as the most effective instructional strategy he has yet discovered; yielding a 45% gain in learning. The *Core Six: Essential Strategies for Achieving Excellence with the Common Core* (Silver, Dewing, and Perini, 2012) details specific steps to build students' higher level thinking skills including careful comparative analysis through reading, thinking, and writing.

The Bear Lake Middle School proposal for differentiated pay:

It is proposed that 6th through 8th grade students' growth on compare and contrast writing tasks be used to award differentiated pay.

Methods

English, science, and math teachers will collaborate during the first semester to develop, administer, and score a compare and contrast essay during the first several weeks of school that uses a prompt from the science content area. Scoring will be based on a science rubric that evaluates content knowledge and analytical thinking and a holistic English rubric that evaluates writing. An English department and a science department representative will be assigned to summarize student performance and present it to the principal and the respective department teams. English and science departments will each set a separate SMART goal for improving student performance (e.g., the number of students scoring proficient will improve from 30% to 70% by the end of the semester). Teachers may meet within 2 weeks of midterm to revise the goal. A second compare and contrast paper will be administered within the last 3 weeks of the 1st semester to measure student progress.

English, social studies, and fine arts teachers will collaborate during the second semester to develop, administer, and score a compare and contrast or informative/explanatory essay during the first four weeks of the semester that uses a prompt from the social studies content area. Scoring will be based on a social studies rubric that evaluates content knowledge and analytical thinking and an English rubric that evaluates writing. An English department and a social studies department representative will be assigned to summarize student performance and present it to the principal and the respective department teams. English and social studies departments will each set a separate SMART goal for improving student performance (e.g., the number of students scoring proficient will improve from 30% to 70% by the end of the semester). Teachers may meet within two weeks of midterm to revise the goal. A second compare and contrast paper will be administered within the last 3 weeks of the 2nd semester to measure student progress.

The school-wide goal will be equal to the average of the four department goals from the two semesters. The school will earn differentiated compensation if the school-wide goal is met.

PLC teams in all subject areas will devote weekly meeting time to devising prompts and instructional activities that build the content knowledge, critical thinking skills, and writing skills reflected in the essay tasks and in the Idaho Core Standards.

Separate writing rubrics and prompts for students with disabilities will be used as needed. The rubrics and prompts will be designed to maintain rigorous academic expectations while honoring the IEP process including students' unique ability levels and learning needs as defined by their IEPs.

Distribution Proposal:

- Differentiated Compensation shall be provided to all the certified and classified staff who work in any capacity in the district (does not include Superintendent).
- Certified itinerant staff members shall attach to the building per the percentage of their FTE assigned to the building.
- Classified staff members (custodian, food service worker, instructional paraprofessional, aides, secretary, bus drivers, district office staff, maintenance staff, mechanic, other district personnel, etc.) shall be compensated at the same level as certified staff and shall attach to the building based on their FTE. All district personnel not specifically assigned to a building will receive an average of all buildings share. No employee will receive more than 1 share.
- Shares will be equalized across the district so that a full share in one building will be equal to a full share in another.
- Persons who work a partial year shall be eligible for differentiated compensation for the time worked.
- Short-term absences shall not be considered when considering working a partial year.
- Long-term substitutes who are either replacement teachers or classified substitutes shall be eligible for differentiated compensation for the time worked that is longer than 6 consecutive weeks.
- Personnel on probation anytime during the year shall not be eligible for differentiated compensation.
- Non-continuing contract teachers who are not renewed for performance reasons will not be eligible for differentiated compensation.
- If one or more schools do not meet their target goals, their allocation will be distributed among the other buildings reaching their target goals.
- 40% of the award for differentiated compensation will be directed toward professional development of staff in relation to implementation of ICS.